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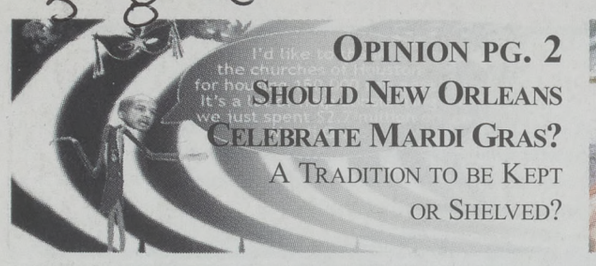

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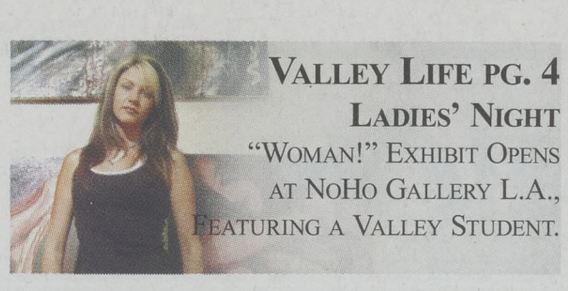
A TRADITION TO BE KEPT OR SHELVED?



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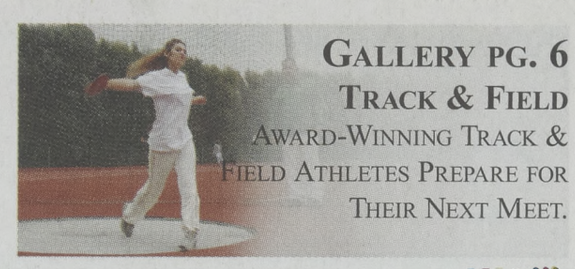

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VALLEY STAR

THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT NEWSPAPER OF LOS ANGELES VALLEY COLLEGE

VOLUME 64, ISSUE NO. 3 | MARCH 8, 2006 | IT'S *YOUR* NEWSPAPER

Survey Looks at Student Rights

BY LAGINA PHILLIPS
MANAGING EDITOR

A Student Rights Survey was recently distributed to Valley College students and instructors to test claims made by the proposed Academic Bill of Rights, legislation that would prevent instructors from including their personal beliefs and opinions in their teachings and would require them to teach all views on a subject.

The survey found that the majority of Valley students have not experienced biased teachings or feel as though their instructors have pushed their political or religious beliefs on them. The creators of the survey, anthropology instructors Sue Engler and Rebecca Stein, wanted to find out the frequency and impact of such occurrences and to collect opinions on appropriate instructor behavior.

The purpose of the survey is to "find out if there is an issue and if there is, address it," said Stein. "We didn't have an agenda, [it was] honest to goodness curiosity."

The instructors plan to use the results of the survey results as a springboard for a STARS workshop on campus this semester.

The 41-question student survey was distributed to more than 30 courses in 19 disciplines and is based on more than 900 student responses; more than 120 Valley instructors completed the instructor version. For each item students and instructors were given a choice of "strongly agree," "agree," "disagree" or "strongly disagree."

While a majority of students and instructors disagreed with the question: "A course on human biological evolution should include information on the view that God is the primary architect of human affairs," more than 81 percent of students agreed with the statement: "Professors should be required to present all possible views on a topic," but instructors were split, 45 percent disagreeing and 55 percent agreeing.

Instructors' answers were also split when asked about what exactly academic freedom is; when presented with the statement "Academic freedom means that a professor can discuss whatever he or she wants to in class" 57 percent of instructors disagreed and 43 percent agreed.

The personal experiences and opinions portions found that most students disagreed with statements such as "I feel that professors are trying to indoctrinate me into a specific viewpoint that I don't agree with" and both students and instructors disagreed with "It would be inappropriate for a professor to make a political joke during class (e.g., against the President or the war in Iraq)."

Engler and Stein were prompted to conduct this survey after The Academic Bill of Rights was proposed. The professors

see *'Survey'* page 3

MONARCH STADIUM

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

HEAVY LIFTING- Jim Walker (right) and Greg Cervantez (left) move pipes to be laid at the Monarch Stadium, currently under construction.

See related story, ***page 5.***

Teaching Icon Visits Valley

■ Educator hope to take a stand to deliver success.

BY WILL REYES
STAFF WRITER

Valley College hosted a teaching legend this past Tuesday, as former East Los Angeles math teacher Jaime Escalante spoke to a group of principals, parents and teachers from across the San Fernando Valley in Monarch Hall.

"I'm absolutely thrilled that he came to [Valley]," said Dr. Tyree Wieder, Valley's president. "I think he is great because he has a true respect for students and believes they can learn."

The "Economic Alliance" was the setting for his appearance, as various educational, community and business representatives gathered to discuss ideas on improving performances in math and assisting students to pass the California High School Exit Exam.

Known for his innovative teaching techniques, Escalante's story was the inspiration behind the acclaimed 1988 film "Stand and Deliver." The movie told the tale of his work at Garfield High in the 80s, a school stricken by drugs and gangs, to overcome the odds and lead a group of underachieving math students to successfully pass the AP Calculus Exam in 1982.

The Educational Testing Service, which gave the test, initially invalidated the students' scores, believing they had passed by cheating. His students' retook the exam and passed, turning Escalante into a hero.

Escalante, who was born in Bolivia and taught there, came to the U.S. in 1964 and worked as a busboy to pay his way through school before becoming a credentialed teacher. Believing that properly motivating students is a key factor in their success, he instilled determination in his students and transformed Garfield's AP Calculus program into one of the top five in the nation in 1987.

Today, many of California's high school students are unable to pass the state required exit exam, leaving one in eight high school seniors, roughly 100,000 across the state, with the possibility that they will not graduate. The numbers have raised serious concern, and the forum was organized to find ways to help, including inviting the retired Escalante to Valley to give his unique point of view.

"My presentation was to give ideas to help the students learn to pass the test," Escalante said. His current trip to southern California has seen him visit seven high schools and most recently the Valley campus, which hopes to bring him back.

"I was impressed, this is my first time at Valley," Escalante said. "But I'm living in Bolivia now with projects there, so the future will be hard to predict."

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

STAND AND DELIVER- Jaime Escalante, acclaimed teacher, seen here with Valley College President Dr. Tyree Wieder, visited the campus to address community members and local educators about improving high school students' math performances on the High School Exit Exam.

Enrollment Dip Doesn't Deter Drive

BY LAGINA PHILLIPS
MANAGING EDITOR

Valley College failed to meet its projected enrollment again this semester, attracting only 15,932 students, and will be required to return a nearly $1-million grant from the state, but the Valley administration is optimistic.

"I'm not interested in butts in seats," said Student Services Vice President Yasmin Delahoussaye. "I'm interested in student success."

After slipping to 16,238 students last fall from 16,920 in fall 2004, administrators assembled an enrollment task force, which pinpointed the reason for the decline in enrollment on the schedule of classes, including the types of classes offered and the times they were offered.

see *'Enrollment'* page 3

Valley Students Reach Out to Help Rape Survivors

ALEX FAYVIL / VALLEY STAR

VALLEY TRAUMA CENTER – Valley Trauma Center Executive Director Charlie Hanson, (center), begins the state-certified Rape Crisis Advocate training. Verenice Lopez (left) and Ashlie Aragon (right) are two of the Valley College students who will undergo the training and become advocates as part of their Sociology 385 course.

BY MAGGIE OWNBEY
OPINION EDITOR

When a survivor of rape is going through the first emotional moments of questions and exams at a hospital, the one thing they may need most of all is simply someone's hand to hold.

Reaching out beyond the typical classroom, Valley College's sociology 385, The Rape Crisis Advocate Project, gives directed studies students the opportunity and skills to become that person.

"[The RCA] is there to support, believe and care about the survivor and make it as non-traumatic as possible under extreme circumstances," said Jae Weiss, Valley alumna and director of prevention education at the Valley Trauma Center in Van Nuys.

"[We] honor their humanity [at a time] when they have been stripped of their personhood."

A former student of Valley sociology instructor Michael Vivian in the early 1990s, Weiss was part of his directed studies program working at that time at the Women's County Jail.

"It was a life altering experience," said Weiss. "[Students learn] what it's like to do the work – and to see how strongly they feel."

Weiss adds that many of the center's stellar volunteers come from Vivian's classes – they are held educationally to a high standard.

"Sociology has always had a tradition of involvement with the community since the beginning of the department," said Vivian.

The center, which opened in 1986, offers the only crisis hotlines serving the 1.8 million people of the San Fernando and Santa Clarita valleys and is affiliated with the Educational Psychology Department at CSUN.

It is funded through donations, grants (including one from Homeland Security) and events like the "Walk a Mile in Her Shoes" fundraiser, where men slip into high heels of every shape and height and walk down Ventura Boulevard.

Counseling services at the center help survivors overcome the shame connected with the assault, which often has victims wondering whether they brought the attack on them-

see *'Center'* page 3

PROVOCATIVE SPEAKERS SERIES

The Fall of the Bush Empire

BY MAGGIE OWNBEY
OPINION EDITOR

On Oct. 7, 2002, President Bush warned Americans of a significant danger that was only growing worse with time: "If we know Saddam Hussein has dangerous weapons today – and we do – does it make any sense for the world to wait to confront him as he grows even stronger and develops even more dangerous weapons?"

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

BUSH BE GONE - Former U.N. Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter urges Americans to act.

In December 2003, former United Nations Weapons Inspector Scott Ritter told the Valley Star, "It's safe to say that, in 1998, using what I called 'qualitative benchmarks' Iraq was fundamentally disarmed."

Marlene Share, co-chair of the Public Affairs Committee at the Valley Cities Jewish Community Center, opened the first evening of the 2006 four-part Provocative Speakers Series on Feb. 28 with a quote from the foreword of Ritter's new book, "Iraq Confidential," in which Seymour Hersch of the New Yorker Magazine wrote: "The most important thing to know about Scott Ritter, the man, is that he was right."

A former Marine intelligence officer, Ritter served as a U.N. weapons inspector in Iraq from 1991 to 1998. He was chief inspector in 14 of the more than 30 inspection missions in which he participated, and was in charge of searching out weapons of mass destruction.

Ritter stepped up to the podium last Tuesday and challenged the more than 125 audience members that came to the VCJCC to become more patriotic American citizens: "Be knowledgeable – know what's going on in our government and challenge it."

"The only reason we went to war was WMD, [that was] the sole reason put forth by this president."

Ritter said he can't under-

see *'Ritter'* page 3

OPINION

WE'RE NOT PSYCHIC

So tell us what's on your mind! Contact The Valley Star at thevalleystar@yahoo.com, drop by the newsroom at BJ114 or call us at (818) 947-2576. Letters should be limited to 300 words and may be edited for publication.

ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

EACH WEEK, THE VALLEY STAR EXAMINES AN ISSUE FROM TWO SIDES. THIS WEEK:
SHOULD NEW ORLEANS CELEBRATE MARDI GRAS?

■ **Make your voice heard! Participate in the online poll at *www.lavalleystar.com***

The Unbreakable Spirit of Tradition

■ Celebration breathes new life into New Orleans.

BY SEDA TERZYAN
STAFF WRITER

It's hard to believe that six months ago the Gulf Coast was hit by one of the most powerful hurricanes in history. It swept through with tremendous force and swallowed up entire cities, transforming them into swamps full of death, destruction and ruined lives.

Carrying on with the great tradition of Mardi Gras in the midst of chaos seemed unrealistic to some, with all the work still to be done to rebuild a city in shambles.

In reality, it was crucial to hang on to tradition for the sake of the people and the spirit of the city.

It is necessary for a community that was so violently torn apart to come back together with pride and strength. Celebrating Mardi Gras convinced the citizens of Louisiana and the rest of the country that they would rise again; New Orleans was not killed in the storm, it was merely injured.

The celebration of Mardi Gras has gained new meaning. Now it's about getting a city off its broken feet and rebuilding, physically and emotionally.

It is a celebration of life, fertility and rebirth.

Those were the themes celebrated; the city was born again, stronger and more prepared.

"There's still a great soul that lives in the city that 10 feet, 12 feet of water can't kill, and its coming back," said New Orleans native Donald Rooney.

Mardi Gras inspired the people of New Orleans with a fresh new perspective on life. They needed it now more than ever; there is only so much pain the heart can bear.

Add to that, the anger and frustration of feeling like the forgotten citizens of America.

Mardi Gras, roughly translated means "Fat Tuesday," the final day for overindulgence in food, drink, and other excesses before the beginning of Lent, a religious time of prayer, fasting, and reflection.

This year, Mardi Gras was more than just a day to eat, drink, and have fun. It celebrated the continuation of life after the storm, symbolizing the people's determination to return to normal by hanging on to their greatest tradition.

If New Orleans passed on Mardi Gras this year it would have meant that the hope for change, stability and improvement would be further or forever delayed.

It was now or never, and New Orleans chose now.

"It's been absolutely – I don't know how to describe it – great," said Mayor Ray Nagin. "Katrina did a lot of bad things. But it has done something to give New Orleans a fresh love for their city."

The next step is to begin rebuilding lives and infrastructure so that all those who had to leave New Orleans can come back home.

Though storms will inevitably come and go, and lives will be changed forever, enlightening souls through celebrations of hope like Mardi Gras is the only way for people to remember that life goes on.

In the words of Scarlett O'Hara from "Gone with the Wind:"

"Tomorrow is another day!"

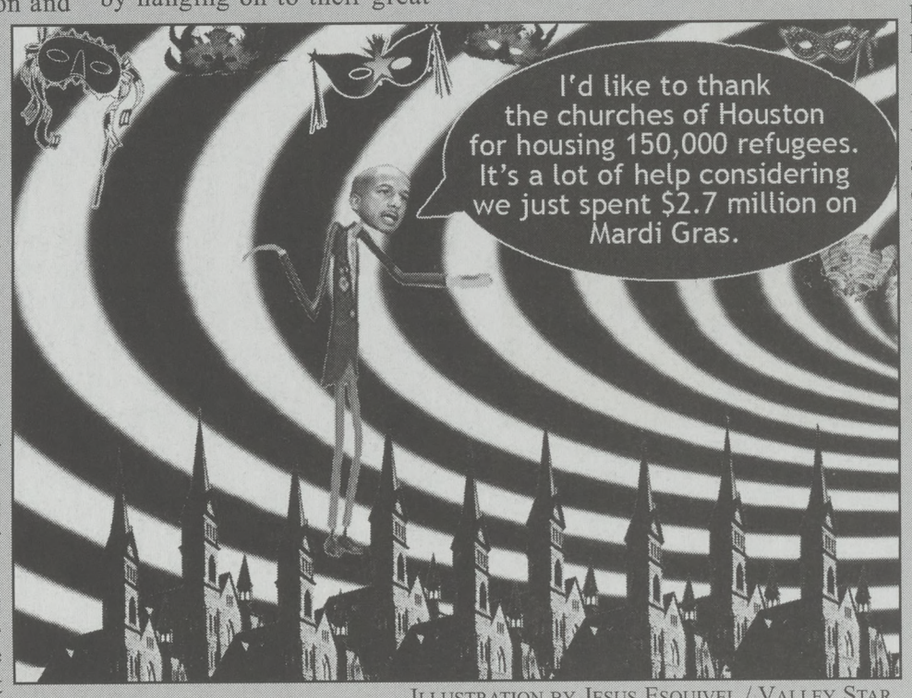

I'd like to thank the churches of Houston for housing 150,000 refugees. It's a lot of help considering we just spent $2.7 million on Mardi Gras.

ILLUSTRATION BY JESUS ESQUIVEL / VALLEY STAR

Masking the Big Easy's Real Issues

■ New Orleans sells its soul for a day of gold.

BY MARCO ELORREAGA
STAFF WRITER

Tradition in America's eyes is a good thing. It's tradition to have fireworks on the Fourth of July. It's tradition to witness Punxsutawney Phil see or not see his shadow on Groundhog's Day. Tradition in a sense gives identity to the people who celebrate it.

To continue with tradition for tradition's sake, takes the sanctity out of it.

Allan Bloom once said, "As soon as something has come to be recognized as tradition, it is dead."

This year's Mardi Gras falls into that category. It is giving an identity to a city that has lost its sense of identity.

Since Hurricane Katrina, only 190,000 residents have returned to New Orleans out of the half-million prior to the hurricane.

The city is a ghost town barely getting back on its own two feet, but the city government found it necessary to spend $2.7 million on preparations for the festivities.

"With them putting on Mardi Gras, without still having not addressed the basic human needs in this city, why that's just a slap in the face," said Samuel Spears, a refugee who watched the teleplay of the parade. "I can't go home, but they can have a parade? That's ridiculous."

Although many city officials have said that the outcome of Mardi Gras would be far more beneficial than negative by bringing in revenues reaching billions of dollars, how long will it be before that money is seen?

The problem was imminent six months ago and it's imminent now. There is no time to wait anymore.

People still don't have homes — they don't have stability.

There is a constant limbo in life for all who were affected by Katrina, and that $2.7 million could have helped businesses stay open. It could have been allocated to people who can't come home. It could have given hope to a staggering effort in reviving the city from ruins. It could have repaired a roof.

Come March 15, St. Augustine Church, a church built by freed slaves in 1834, will close because there aren't enough people to keep the parish going. Only 506 restaurants of the 1,882 restaurants before Katrina are open according to the New Orleans Restaurant Association.

New Orleans boasts about the sold out vacancies in their hotels, but there are fewer hotel rooms — 15,000 out of 25, 000 rooms — and some of those were filled with construction workers and evacuees.

"You can't have Mardi Gras culture without New Orleans people," said Donna Smith, a refugee in Houston. "The people are the culture. Mardi Gras is the last thing that needed to happen."

As the city's economy continues to suffer, this one-week stand by tourists or visiting residents, who just came for a good time, is not going to have any long-term effects on the recovery.

Only 300,000 people attended this Mardi Gras, when normally one million attend.

Instead of having the city put so much effort and time into a soulless Mardi Gras, it should have spent more time to bring back its soul permanently — to bring back its people.

Without its people, tradition is nothing.

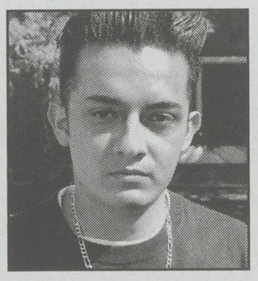
Campus View

PHOTOS BY DAVID ELIAS

How should New Orleans be handling Mardi Gras?

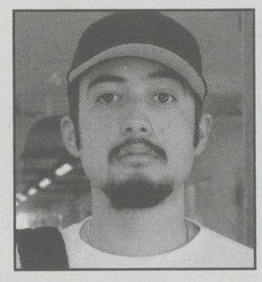
"I think they should have it because if it brings in money for the city they could use it."

-Rocio Calzadilla
Media Arts



"The party should go on it might take their minds off the destruction. They can still have fun, life goes on."

-Herbert Arriola
Media Arts



"They should not stop having it, it's a tradition and it might get their minds off all they have been through."

-Sergio Recedez
History Major

"Sometimes we have to overlook the tragedy to bring in revenue, I think they should do it to the best of their capability to bring in revenue."

-Lillian Isaacs
Medical Terminology

Midnight at the Garden of Evil

■ Doctors need an injection of reality.

BY MARCO ELORREAGA
STAFF WRITER

If doctors lived and died by the Hippocratic Oath, we would have a lot of dead doctors.

Two weeks ago, rapist and murderer Michael Morales received another two months to live while the needle undergoes scrutiny because two anesthesiologists had a sudden lapse of their "morals."

California moved from the gas chamber to lethal injection as its preferred method of death in 1996, but since its arrival, increasing evidence shows that it only masks the excruciating pain of going into cardiac arrest.

This mainly occurs when incompetent personnel such as prison guards or nurse practitioners conduct the execution and don't give the right dosages in the three-drug cocktail.

Prison staffers were heard saying, "You doing that right?" as 20 minutes dragged on during Stanley "Tookie" Williams' execution.

Yet, doctors are supposed to do no harm.

"They butchered me back there," said Benny Demps to the witnesses of his June 7, 2000 execution. "I was in a lot of pain. They cut me in the groin. They cut me in the leg. This is not an execution, it is murder."

It took prison personnel 33 minutes to enter the poison-administering tubes into his veins.

Yet, doctors are supposed to do no harm.

When doctors refuse to partake in any capital punishment executions, they leave the prisoners as meat to be mutilated by 5 year olds who want to play "Operation."

Yet, doctors are supposed to do no harm.

As history has shown, bystanders are as culpable as the criminals, especially when they can do something about it.

For doctors to allow suffering is to do indirect harm.

Because of the Morales incident, the California Medical Association is now pushing for a bill that will prohibit any physician to assist in executions.

This is wrong.

To punish doctors who are merciful to the condemned should be applauded.

For doctors to object or not participate in the execution doesn't stop the execution from happening. The bloodshed is still on their hands.

In a survey conducted by the Archives of Internal Medicine, 43 percent of responding physicians have no problems with other doctors taking an active role in an execution.

This will all change if a bill is passed. There will be witch-hunts for anyone who has a different point-of-view on the Hippocratic Oath.

In essence, isn't that what it all comes down to? A difference in view.

The "sitz im leben" determines how the Hippocratic Oath is perceived. Only in the big state of liberal California the oath seems to take more of an anti-capital punishment interest.

In a 1993 survey of 150 U.S. and Canadian medical schools: "Only 14 percent of modern oaths prohibit euthanasia, 11 percent hold covenant with a deity, 8 percent foreswear abortion, and a mere 3 percent forbid sexual contact with patients."

It is evident that the oath is up for interpretation.

Some doctors view the death-row prisoner as a terminal patient and find their presence not as an "executioner" but as a responsible doctor.

But doctors are a rare breed. They play God all day by saving lives, curing diseases, giving hope to those who seek their assistance.

When a death-row inmate asks for the same mercy, he is denied because doctors are to "first, do no harm."

If they implement a new bill to bar doctors from assisting in executions, the government might as well change the U.S. Constitution to allow "cruel and unusual punishment."

More Spying, Anyone?

■ Cancelled project finds secret new life.

BY BRIAN DEAN
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

The desire to spy on citizens comes naturally to governments in an environment of fear.

Since Sept. 11, 2001, several programs have been launched with the stated purpose of combating terrorism, but have been called into question for overstepping their boundaries.

Halted by Congress in September 2003, the Terrorist (originally Total) Information Awareness (TIA) program secretly lives on under new management.

TIA's objective was to detect potential terrorist activity by gathering a wide array of personal information such as financial transactions, medical and communications records, travel details, etc, into a massive database.

More importantly, the program was to develop the frighteningly complex data mining tools to make connections among the enormous quantity of information.

Responding to the public's concerns of an Orwellian system of mass surveillance, Congress cancelled funding for TIA and the Pentagon's Information Awareness Office that created it.

That should have been the end.

That should have sent a clear message to the executive branch of the public's distaste for being tracked, catalogued and watched over like inventory.

But according to the National Journal, significant components of TIA were moved from the Pentagon to the National Security Agency into a department called the Advanced Research and Development Activity.

These important components focus on the development of links between analysts and policy makers, and research into data gathering and analysis methods.

From encouraging citizens to spy on each other through Operation TIPS, to warrantless wiretaps, programs like these are nothing more than convenient methods for wearing security as a disguise.

At best, they represent the paranoia that typically accompanies secretive administrations under a perceived threat; at worst, a clear and present danger to civil liberties.

When will it end? When Osama bin Laden is captured? When the war on terror is finally over?

Or perhaps when future leaders make a more logical approach to the term "defense."

'Ritter' continued from page 1

stand how the American people remain passive today as this administration carries forth in an identical fashion in what they call the global war on terror.

"We're headed down the same path, ladies and gentlemen, another war, another military intervention," said Ritter of the threat of war with Iran over their nuclear weapons program. "Once again the dogs of war are screaming – why because they have WMD – sound familiar?"

Painting a graphic illustration of the realities of war Ritter said, "Go ahead Hollywood, make that glamorous if you can."

At this time, Ritter said the only viable course of action is to re-establish a system of checks and balances within the government.

"Through the years – through discussions, debates, etc. — the VCJCC has been a vibrant voice for bringing the issues of the day into the community," said Harriet Glickman, co-chair of the Public Affairs Committee. Ritter told the Star in an interview before his speech, "If you choose not to speak out, you're more guilty of sedition than anyone who chooses to speak out: the only sedition is silence."

The series continues on March 15 with Robert Scheer, nationally syndicated columnist and author and founder/editor of Truthdig. Scheer appears weekly on NPR station KCRW's " Left Right and Center."

For more information and tickets contact Valley Cities Jewish Community Center at (818) 786-6310 or visit www.valleycitiesjcc.org.

'Center' continued from page 1

selves. Working with a survivors' support group is also important, says Weiss, who adds that the center sees more than 1,200 victims of sexual abuse each year, ranging from ages 5 to 100.

The center's volunteer training program consists of the 60-hour state-certified training that is required to become a rape crisis advocate. When they finish they are ready to be at the side of a survivor, but often a student's biggest fear is that they won't be able to actually do it after they go through the training, according to Weiss.

"[They discover that they are] so much more prepared," said Weiss, who describes the training as an emotional boot camp. "And that they felt so much better to be able to be there for someone."

Visit www.valleytraumacenter.org for more information.

'Enrollment' continued from page 1

The schedule was revamped in time for the spring semester and the campus had a One-Stop Registration Day to encourage students to return in the spring, as well as a New Student Welcome Day at the beginning of this semester, and while Valley President Dr. Tyree Wieder credits all three efforts as successes, it wasn't enough to meet the campus' target enrollment.

"We're pleased," said Wieder. "We were closer to hitting our target this time than last spring."

Additional efforts to boost enrollment included advertising in movie theaters and on cable television and the mailing of mini-class schedules.

After discovering over the winter session that more than 5,000 students who took classes during fall had not registered for spring and nearly 1,500 more filled out applications for spring but had not completed the process, the office of student services implemented Operation Enrollment Drive, calling all those students to assist with the process.

Wieder points out that enrollment growth is dismal throughout the district as well as California. Though Valley was required to return the $1 million to the state, the campus might get that money back through other state grants.

Valley plans to continue its One-Stop Registration Day, with two days scheduled for May 23 and 24.

'Survey' continued from page 1

say that the bill lacks research to back up its claims about faculty conduct and student experiences.

Critics of the bill argue that its language, specifically references to "student immaturity," is insulting to students.

Section 1, article D of the bill reads: " … To achieve the intellectual independence of students, teachers should not take unfair advantage of a student's immaturity by indoctrinating him or her with the teacher's own opinions before a student has had an opportunity fairly to examine other opinions upon the matters at question …"

David Horowitz, who introduced the bill nearly three years ago, wrote in a recent Los Angeles Times column that he introduced the legislation "to persuade colleges and universities to adopt an 'Academic Bill of Rights' to protect students from unprofessional political indoctrination by their professors."

However, opponents of the bill say that the Higher Education Act, which states that curriculum is under the jurisdiction of the faculty, should stay as it is. They also say that an amendment to the HEA saying otherwise would violate instructors' freedom of speech.

"We are not in favor of professors indoctrinating students, but it's important that the faculty deliver interpretations of their discipline," said a spokesman for the American Association of University Professors, which is a leading opponent to the measure.

Similar legislation has been introduced in every state and language on academic freedom has been introduced into the Higher Education Amendments of 2005. Several state legislatures considered similar proposals over the past two years, including California, and the furthest the resolution reached is approval by the Georgia State Senate and the establishment of a committee to study the measure in Pennsylvania. Kansas, Hawaii and New York are considering the proposal this year.

Complete results of the Student Rights Survey can be found on the college's website at www.lavc.edu.

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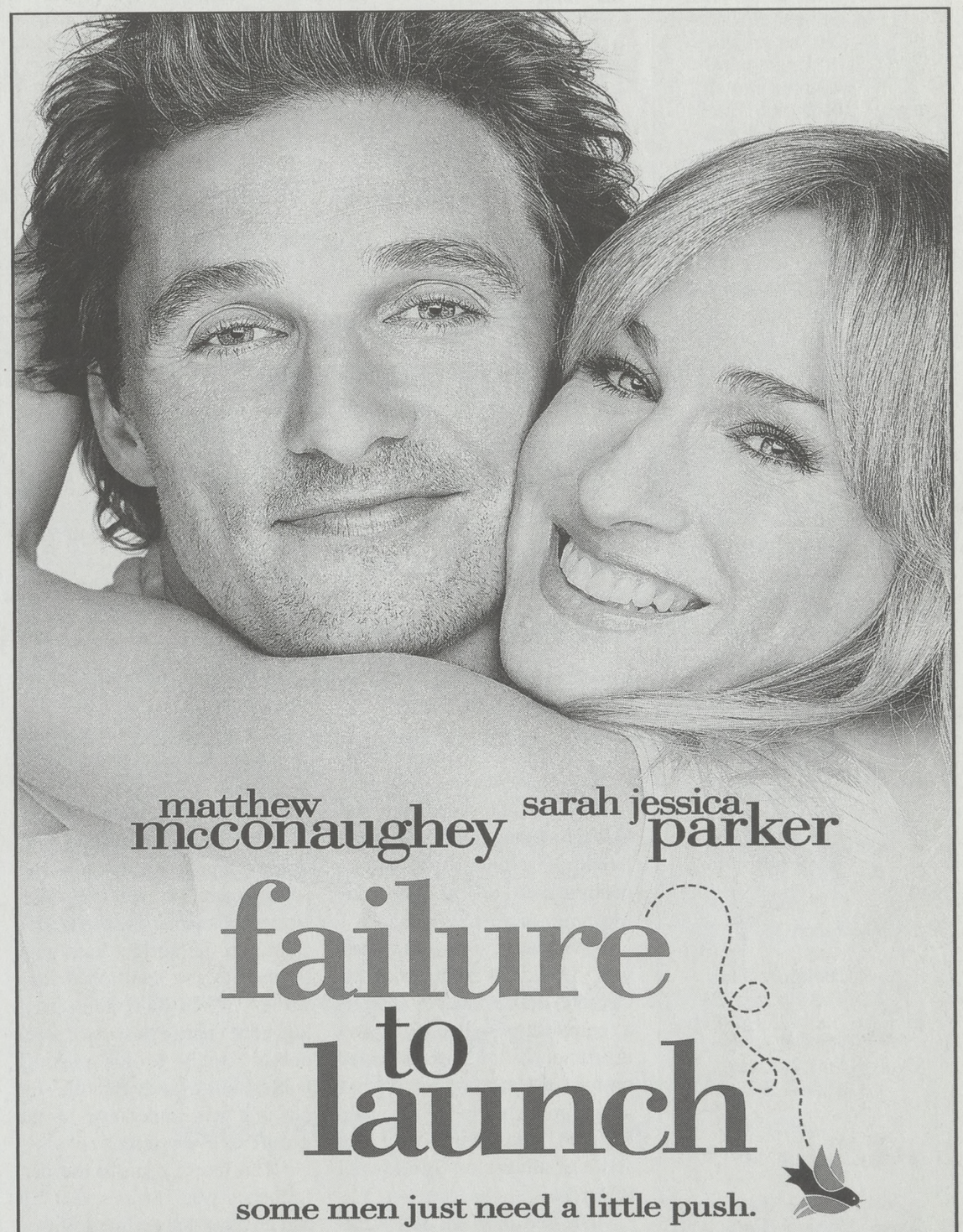

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WEDNESDAY TO TUESDAY

Wednesday, March 8

Neko Case
Amoeba Music
6400 Sunset Blvd.
Hollywood
7 p.m. Free
(323) 245-6400

Thursday, March 9

Dennis Redd
will conduct a brief talk about Ansel Adams, Edward Weston and other photographers included in "Perception: Bay Area Photography."
Valley College Art Gallery
Free, 1 p.m.
for info e-mail: reeddj@lavc.edu

Hear and Meet Matisyahu
Tower Records
19320 Nordhoff St.
Northridge
5 p.m. First 400 people to purchase "Youth" will receive places infront of the stage.
(818) 993-4911

Friday, March 10

Noah K. Presents Fright Night
"I Eat Your Skin"
"White Zombie"
Miss La Diva and Her Darling Burlesque Dancers and an art show and signing by Michael Broom
8:30 p.m. 18+ $10
11334 Burbank Blvd.
North Hollywood, CA
(818) 506-6353

Movie Releases:
"The Shaggy Dog" (PG)
"Failure to Launch" (PG-13)
"The Hills Have Eyes" (R)
"The Libertine" (R)
"Ask the Dust" (R)
"The Heart Is Deceitful Above All Things" (R)

Saturday, March 11

Dave Attel
Improv Comedy Showcase and Restaurant
10:30 p.m.
8162 Melrose Ave.,
Los Angeles
(323) 651-2583

Monday, March 13

Division Day
The Echo 1822 Sunset Blvd. Echo Park, 8:30 p.m., free 21+ www.attheecho.com

Tuesday, March 14

Movie Releases:
"Good Night, and Good Luck" (PG)
"Babylon 5: Legend of the Rangers" (PG)

Art of Women! at the NoHo Gallery L.A.

■ NoHo Gallery L.A. showcases art by women about women.

BY MARC HOWARD
STAFF WRITER

Femininity has exploded inside the NoHo Gallery L.A. It is bursting from the canvases on the walls, flooding the gallery. It permeates the atmosphere like a sound or scent.

The gallery will acknowledge Women's History Month with an exhibition called "Woman!," a varied collection of artistic representations of the human female created mostly by women.

"Women are a common subject of art," said gallery director Dan DeBevoise. "We decided that for this show we would put women in the driver's seat."

Among the attractive works in the exhibit, Valley College art major Anji Craun's oil paintings stand out. In "Moonstruck" a woman's beautiful blue and black face nearly fills the frame. There is a searing rage living within the painting and in the woman's intense glare; a lone teardrop trickles from her eye.

In "Lisa" a woman's flesh is rendered in pinkish red; the womanly curves of her body seem to burst out from the canvas. She is outlined by a mysterious white glow; there is an unseen light shining. Her soft blue hair flows out in billowing curly locks flooding the rest of the frame.

"I don't try to paint with a particular intent of sending a message," Craun says. "I try to communicate an aura ... the work in this series celebrates the beauty and complexity of the female."

Painter and sculptress Alisa Gabrielle's vision has been severely blurred for most of her adult life due to Keratoconus. In 2001, she received a corneal transplant and she now has 20/40 vision in her right eye. She's found ways to continue working despite her limited vision. Her works include surreal charcoal drawings she calls "Psychic Sketches," in which images such as women, babies, hands, eyes, hair and bodies meld together in a sort of dream-like or hallucinogenic way.

In "Dreamer" a woman sleeps nude and the peaceful look on her face suggests that she sleeps in contentedness, but her fiery red skin suggests the repose is in anger or some other state of arousal.

Her portrait of a man and woman, "Body and Soul," represents two inner selves; two souls or spirits. It shows what one might see of two people in the absence of their physical forms.

Vera Akotuah's background in fashion manifests itself in the attitude conveyed by the women in her black and white charcoal drawings. She began working on the drawings in the show when she was eight months pregnant.

"They say a woman can be very creative during pregnancy and I found this to be true ... I had a huge belly and found it hard walking outside a lot, so I just decided to pick up some charcoal and start drawing," Akotuah said.

The exhibit will be showing through April 1. Admission is free. The artist reception will be held on Wednesday, March 8 from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m.; women and men, lovers of art and of women are encouraged to attend.

Gallery hours are Thursday through Saturday from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. and Sunday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. Admission is free. NoHo Gallery L.A. (818) 761-7784 www.nohogalleryla.com

VALLEY PEOPLE

Valley College Art Student's Work Featured in Local Gallery

■ Student who overcame injury has her work in an exhibit called "Woman!"

BY SEDA TERZYAN
STAFF WRITER

Anji Craun is an artist to the core with a natural talent for creation despite limited formal training and having suffered a debilitating injury that hindered her ability to paint.

Craun's plans to study art at the College of Charleston in South Carolina in 2002 were violently changed when she was attacked by a pit-bull after trying to stop it from attacking another woman. The dog nearly bit off her entire thumb, incapacitating the use of her right hand for more than five months.

Now, just four years later, Craun is a Valley College art major with her work on display at the NoHo Gallery L.A. in an exhibit called "Woman!" that will be featured through April 1.

"It made me realize the importance of every little piece of the body," said the 29-year-old artist.

While in the process of healing, Craun decided to take her long-awaited trip to California, where she's lived since with her fiancée, Freddy Herrera, bass player for the rock band, The Exies.

Craun's painting atmosphere is always full of music and creation with her fiancée's band practicing and writing new songs while she paints.

"Myself and the whole band really enjoy the fact that Anji's creating at the same time we are," Herrera said. "Plus, we get the first look at all her new art."

With her use of loud, vibrant colors full of contrast and depth, yet possessing a mysterious balance of value. She paints with little planning, riding on the wings of inspiration, she is truly a painting rock star.

"The women in my recent series exude sensuality, power, serenity and self discovery," Craun said. "Each piece is a reflection of a moment, whether it be sadness, rejoice or contemplation."

Craun's recovery was a success; she decided to continue her studies by signing up for classes at Valley. She has been enrolled for three semesters now and has taken some great art classes, like life drawing with professor Samuel Goffredo, where her drawing skills were tuned. She also took graphic design and photographics with instructor Thomas Mossman, from which some of her work is on display in the halls of the art building. Presently, she is taking her second semester of oil painting with instructor Walter Impert, which has helped her discover new avenues of her abilities.

"Anji's paintings are filled with intuitive color and form, each complimenting the other synergistically, creating rich, vivid artwork," said Impert.

Craun describes her paintings as "... neither realistic nor abstract. Although they lean toward realistic." I tend to be more representational so that the attention is not drawn to detailed perfection, but rather on the feeling the piece communicates as a whole." She strives to capture an aura, a fleeting moment of a specific emotion. Most of her paintings consist of the female figures in various moods, isolated in simple backgrounds, only meant for contrasting the figure.

Originally from Northern Virginia where she was born and raised, Craun has moved many times since then. After graduating high school she moved to Atlanta, where she studied fashion design for a short period before leaving for Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. This was where she discovered painting as a hobby.

Craun was 23-years-old when she received a painting set as a gift from a friend and things took off from there.

Without former training or direction, Craun began to create art, and develop her unique style. She began to come out of her shell, as her work was sold to private owners, it was seen by more people. She received several commissions for her edgy, powerful paintings from nightclubs, coffee shops and other small businesses, where her work was displayed. But this is her first time featured in an actual art gallery.

Craun's medium of choice is oil and acrylic paints. She works with confidence, sometimes mixing her colors right on the canvas. She never constricts herself to a primary plan, but always goes beyond it. Craun can truly be defined as creating a new wave of modern art.

"My paintings symbolize a wide range of universal feelings, any viewer can relate to them on some level, male or female," said Craun.

Twelve of Craun's paintings will be displayed at the gallery, all of which she has created over the past year. Her favorite from the series is a painting called "Moon Struck." It has a mysterious beauty to it, but also conveys a simplistic yet intriguing darker side.

You can view this talented Valley student's work at the NoHo Gallery L.A. or visit her website at www.yessy.com/angicraun.

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

ART WITH ATTITUDE - Valley College art student Anji Craun is featured in a new exhibit called "Woman!" at the NoHo Gallery L.A. in North Hollywood. The exhibit will run until April 1.

David Wilson Played a Fiddle of Gold for Thursday Morning Concert Series

BY JESUS ESQUIVEL
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

By 11 a.m. a crowd of Valley College students and local residents had already gathered outside the recital hall in the music building, waiting for the second performance of the Thursday Morning Concert Series.

This week's musical guest was David Wilson and his Combo Improvana. Wilson is a composer, skilled in many instruments and has recorded on two of Henry Mancini's last album projects. He has also sold 150,000 units from his own series of albums on Swallowtail Records.

Dressed in black and wearing sunglasses in the dark, Wilson's violin playing was cool and loose like a guitar player in a rock band. His strokes were long and seamless on return. Feeling the music, his hands often let go of the violin and it would stay in place wedged between his chin and shoulder.

The 10-song set was mostly original instrumentals with a Latin jazz feel composed by Wilson with three renditions by other artists. The first song, "Meditation" by Antonio Carlos Jobim, came on clear and crisp. Harvey Newmark's thick rich sound on the upright bass gave balance to the high-toned long strokes of Wilson's violin playing. The term "less is more" doesn't apply to his playing, while subtle and smooth, his playing was imperative to the texture of every song.

The fourth song in the performance was "Mother Cat." It had an intro that featured Wilson playing keyboard, set on electric organ. It came in cool and jazzy like "Green Onions" by Booker T and The MG's. The resourceful percussionist Jeff Fish added attitude to the song with his bongo playing and later drummer Rick Latham did some hard-hitting tom work that made for a vibrating feeling in the chest.

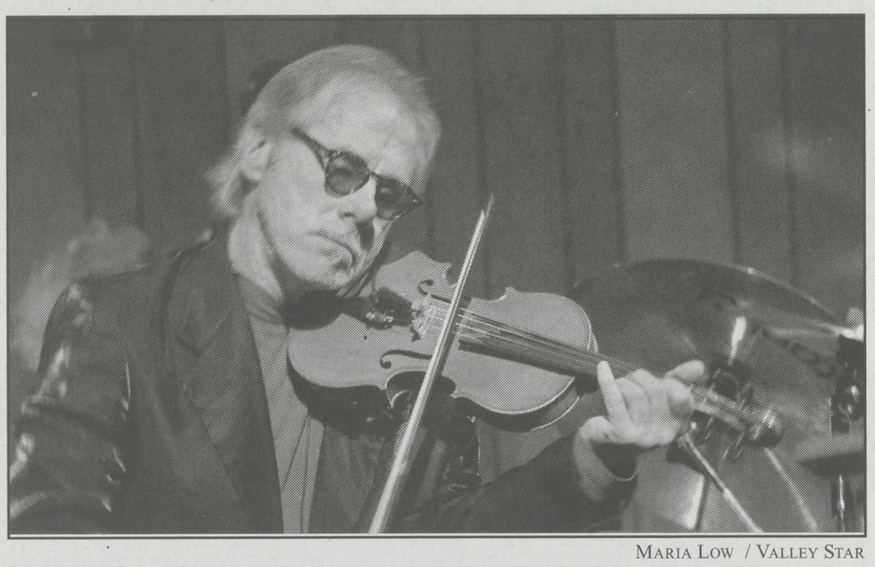
Wilson's attitude throughout the show was mellow and carefree, often asking pianist Benedikt Brydern what song was next, claiming, "I don't know, I don't have a program." He playfully posed with open arms in front of a photographer taking pictures as he spoke and then introduced the next song.

"This next song is inspired by film noir of the '50s," Wilson said after mentioning that all the songs that have been played so far are on a CD you could purchase through Amazon.com. "Its called 'Long Walk Home.'"

The brushes rubbing the snare drum sounded like rain over the organ solo. The slow pace was like a depressing search for redemption while the bass and violin soloed simultaneously as if manifesting themselves as the scattered thoughts one has in such lonely walks.

The show ended with Wilson thanking the audience for coming and event organizer Christian Nova for inviting them to play.

These great shows are taking place weekly in the recital hall at 11:30 a.m. and shouldn't be taken for granted.



MARIA LOW / VALLEY STAR

SWEET TUNES - Valley College welcomes David Wilson and his Combo Improvana performing Latin jazz and light classical in the recital hall in the music building on Thursday March 2.

SOFTBALL

Softball Team Falls Victim to Late Rally

■ The Lady Monarchs can't protect their five-run lead and lose to the Chaffey College Panthers 9-8.

By Daniel Srourian
Staff Writer

The Valley College softball team let one slip away Saturday, losing to the Panthers 9-8 in extra innings at Chaffey College.

Valley could not protect the lead it held throughout the game, which was five runs at one point, and ended with its 10th loss of the season.

Errors also plagued the Monarchs during the most crucial stretch of the game, giving the Panthers opportunities that they took advantage of to earn their 19th victory of the season, one of the best records in the state.

"That ball was foul. I was standing right there, and I could see that it was clearly foul."
-Frankie Garcia

"We can't make mistakes against a good team," said assistant coach Tommy Sotelo after the game. "We have to play seven innings. If you don't, you'll get beat, and that's what happened to us today."

Valley was sharp as the game opened, putting up three runs in the first inning to silence the crowd and the confidence of opposing pitcher Beam Ashely. Valley pitcher Vanessa Hernandez allowed only one run through four innings, as the lead had swelled to 6-1.

But Chaffey simply would not go away. They rallied in the fifth inning, hitting a single and four consecutive doubles to cut the lead to one.

Valley answered back in the sixth as Kali Shepherd and Stephanie Pama had one RBI each to put the lead back at 8-5. Chaffey countered that with a run of their own in the bottom of the inning through a Valley error, which advanced Panther base runner Kelli Acosta all the way home.

Entering the seventh and final inning with a two-run lead, Chaffey led off with a home run by outfielder Stephanie Williams. Hernandez gave up a single to outfielder Jennifer Lawrence, who made it home two batters later by a throwing error by first baseman Claudia Pizano, setting the stage for an extra innings duel in the desert.

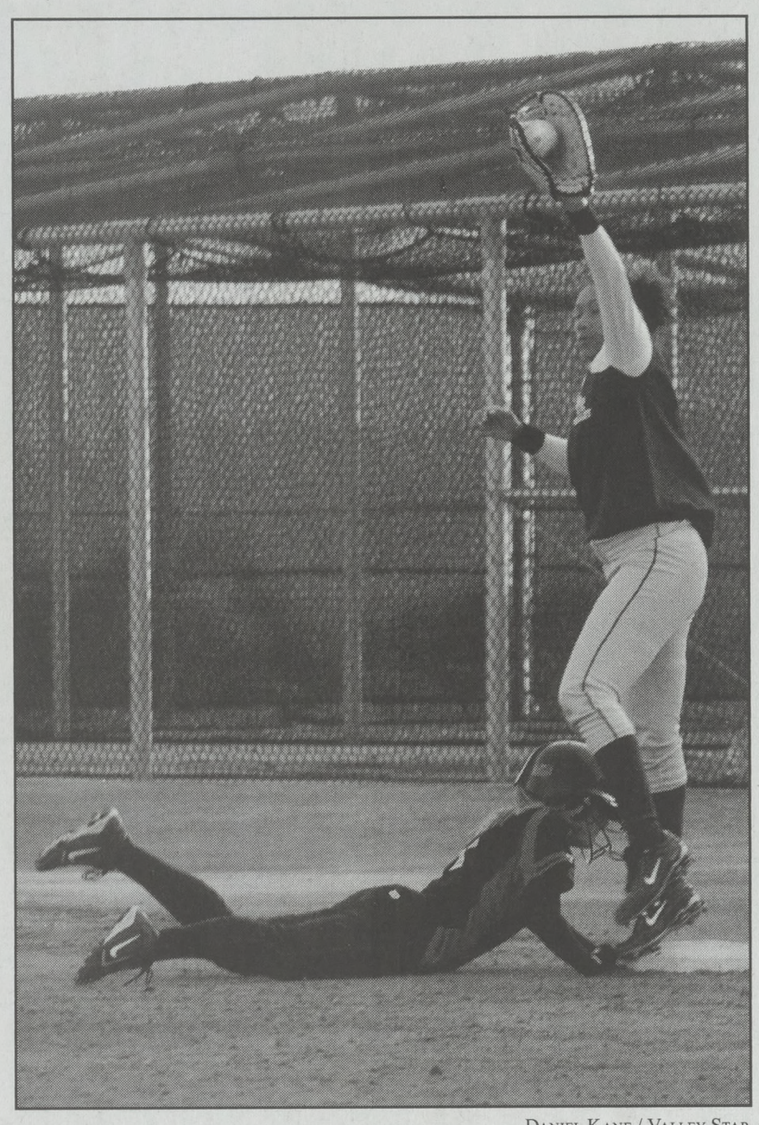
As an international tie-breaker in softball, teams start the extra innings with a runner at second base to speed up the game.

After coming up dry at the plate like they had in the past three innings, Chaffey was able to score the winning run following a debatable hit that seemed to bounce right on the border between foul and fair territory.

"That ball was foul," said coach Frankie Garcia, who disputed the call despite the strong will of the umpire to call the game over. "I was standing right there, and I could see it was clearly foul."

Despite the loss, the team turns its attention now to a crucial conference game against first-place Glendale College on Thursday at Valley, where they can take over first place in the Western State Blue Conference with a win.

"It was just a bad day for us," said first baseman Pizano, who batted .500 with two RBIs. "But we'll bounce back, no doubt about it."



Daniel Kane / Valley Star

REACHING FOR VICTORY - Valley College Monarch Claudia Pizano snatches the ball just as Chaffey College Panther Jennifer Lawrence dives to first base in this seesaw battle at Chaffey College.

Monarch Stadium Under Renovation

By Nick Santoni
Staff Writer

The first phase of the construction on Valley College's 45-year-old Monarch Stadium is slated to finish by the end of this May. The construction, which began last fall, will make the stadium, field and track ready for use.

"I think we were the only school that had a dirt track left," said Valley Athletic Director Chuck Ferrero, who has been working alongside the construction and design teams. "This will completely change the whole configuration of the athletic department."

The roughly $4-million project will boast the only 10-lane NCAA-approved Mondo track in Los Angeles County, and will also include designated areas for all track and field events, including a hammer/discus cage, a pole vault, a jump pit and a stand-alone shot-put area, all to Olympic regulations. The new football/soccer field will be made of Sprinturf synthetic grass and a new "visitors'" section will be built, along with new restrooms, concessions and scoreboards.

The passage of Proposition A in 2001 and Propositions AA and 47 in 2003 granted Valley College $286 million for renovation and construction projects. The funding, gained through LA voters after the 2003 state election, has been put to immediate use.

"Valley College has launched its new educational master plan and is well on its way to campus revitalization," said Valley President Tyree Wieder. "Students, faculty and the community have all been a part of this process, and soon we will see the results of our hard work."

Cannon Design supplied the designs for the stadium renovation, while the URS Corporation is leading the construction of the stadium as well as the campus' multi-million dollar revitalization effort.

Mitch Vaacari, project manager for the renovation and construction at Valley, is pleased with the progress made thus far.

"The stadium is going great," said Vaacari. "Besides running into some unforeseen problems underground, the contractor is doing a fine job, and we're on schedule for completion."

The most recent modification to be finished was the under-laying of the asphalt for the track. The permeable artificial-surface, Sprinturf, will be next.

"We are state-of-the art," said Ferrero. "Now, we can get a lot of the top athletes that would not have chosen Valley in the past. Not to mention enrollment should increase. The amplitude of this will be felt instantly…and for years to come."

The remaining two phases of the construction will focus on perimeter improvements and upgrades to the electric and plumbing aspects of the premises, and should be finished by mid 2007.

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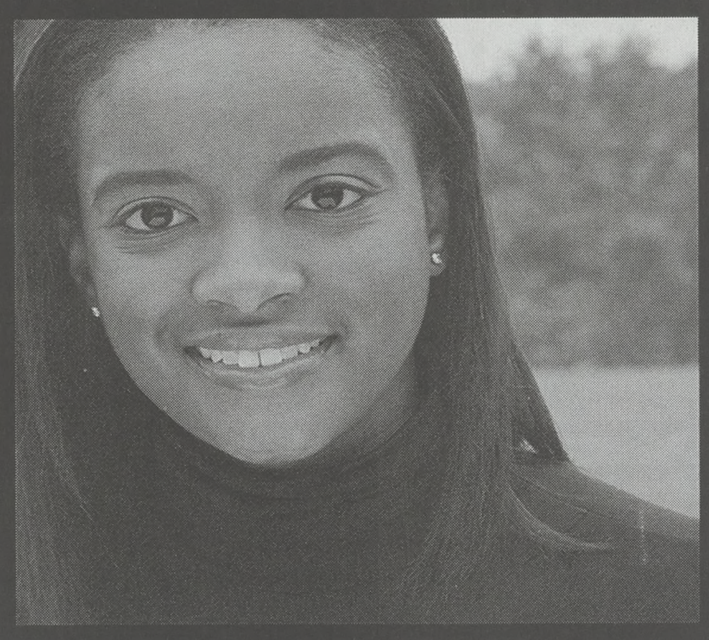

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GALLERY

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

THROWING THE DISTANCE - Nanor Tobejian, who had to put a hold on her distance running due to hip complications, made the switch to discus throwing.

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

AIRBORNE - Alma Palacios ranked 7th in the javelin competition at the Western State Conferance and 9th in the 800-meter run and is seen here leaping high above a large wooden block on the race track.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Photos and Text by Daniel Kane

Looking at the Valley College Track and Field team practicing on the Harvard Westlake campus, one gets a feel of the diversity and difficulty of each event. From javelin, to pole vault, distance running and discus throwing, the sport tests the endurance and strength of its competitors.

The team, which has garnered numerous awards in individual events, is working hard to achieve overall excellence as it trains new athletes and refines the seasoned ones.

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

PULLING HER WEIGHT - Antoinette Burton, star high jumper in the heptathlon, also competes in the long-jump, shot-put, javelin,110-meter hurdles, 200-meter and 800-meter runs.

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

KNEE HIGH- Hurdlers Ruben Guerrero (left) and Charles King (right) march up and down the field preparing themselves for their next competition.

DANIEL KANE / VALLEY STAR

LEADING THE PACK - Michael Stotland, at the head of his teammates, ran the 3,000-meter race in 9:28.